a great potential to enhance trade & investment flows between India and ASEAN countries. As per the joint study, based on the UNCTAD methodology, the aggregate trade between India and ASEAN—5 is estimated to increase three folds from the present level of trade. On the short-term benefits, India and ASEAN seek to deepen cooperation in the areas of Trade Facilitation, Science & Technology, Human Resources Development, Information and Communication Technology, Pharmaceuticals, Tourism, etc. besides promoting people to people linkages.

Refusal of doctors to treat HIV infected patients

1113. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that doctors refuse to treat those patients who are infected with HIV;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that there are ethical guidelines for HIV/AIDS patients framed by the World Health Organisation under which doctors cannot refuse to treat such patients;

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking or have taken in this regard;

(d) whether any awareness campaigns have been launched; and

(e) if so, to what extent they have worked?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) There are reports of medical professional refusing to treat and provide healthcare services to HIV infected patients.

(b) Yes, Sir. The 41st World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on avoidance of discrimination in relation to HIV infected people and people with AIDS on 13th May, 1988. It urged Member States to protect the human rights and dignity of HIV infected people and people with AIDS and to avoid discriminatory action against and stigmatisation of them in the provision of services.

Further, International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and human rights urge that States should ensure that Government and the private sector develop codes of conduct regarding HIV/AIDS issues that translate human rights principles into codes of professional responsibility and practice, with accompanying mechanisms to implement and enforce these codes.

(c) and (d) The Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) Regulations, 2002, clearly states that no physician shall arbitrarily refuse treatment to a patient. It also makes provision for imposition of punishment to medical professionals who violate these Regulations.

The Government has also approved the National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy, 2002 which states that the Government will review and reform criminal laws and correctional systems to ensure that they are consistent with the international human rights obligations and are not misused in the context of HIV/AIDS. As envisaged in the Policy, Government will strengthen anti-discrimination and other protective laws that protect vulnerable groups, people living with HIV/AIDS from discrimination in both the public and private sectors. Government provides anti-retroviral drugs for post-exposure prophylaxis in public sector hospitals treating HIV/AIDS patients, in order to address the concerns of health-care providers to occupational exposure to HIV infection.

The Government has initiated intensive advocacy, sensitisation and training programmes for the medical and paramedical staff so that people living with HIV/AIDS are not discriminated, stigmatised or denied services. The thrust of the ongoing multimedia campaign "Jeeyo aur Jeene do" focuses on stigma and discrimination related to HIV positive people, and aims towards provision of just and fair treatment to them in all spheres, especially in healthcare settings.

(e) The impact of these awareness programmes has been encouraging.

Shortage of medicine in Central Government Hospitals

†1114. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether all hospitals run by Central Government in Delhi are facing shortage of medicine continuously;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.